

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 are pending in the application. Claims 1-6 stand rejected.

Claims 1, 3, 5 and 6 have been amended. No new matter has been added

Claims 3-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Applicant respectfully traverses the examiner's rejection of the claims. However, in order to advance the prosecution of this matter, applicant has amended the claims to more clearly state the invention. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this ground of rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3 stand rejected pursuant to 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over USP No. 5,799,065 to Junqua in view of USP No. 5,392,363 to Fujisaki. It is the examiner's position that with regard to independent claim 1, "Junqua and Fujisaki make a speech recognition embodiment recognizable as a whole to one versed in the art ... Junqua describes a letter-sequence estimating stage ... a post-processing stage ... However, Junqua does not explicitly describe the A\* algorithm. Fujisaki describes an embodiment of recognition of letters of the alphabet using a tree structure corresponding to paths through a Viterbi lattice. Fujisaki also describes ... use [of] the A\* algorithm... It would be obvious ... to include the A\* algorithm with Junqua's DP because Fujisaki shows its suitability in that role and would bring the known A\* search efficiencies to Junqua's beam search." The reasons for rejecting claims 2 and 3 are also based on the Junqua reference.

Claim 4 stands rejected pursuant to 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over USP No. 5,799,065 to Junqua in view of USP No. 5,392,363 to Fujisaki and USP No. 4,907,278 to Cccinati. Claim 5 stands rejected pursuant to 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Junqua and Fujisaki in view of USP No. 5,940,793 to Attwater. Claim 6 stands rejected pursuant to 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Attwater in view of Cccinati.

Applicant respectfully disagrees with, and explicitly traverses, the examiner's reasons for rejecting the claims. However, in the interest of advancing the prosecution of this application, applicant has amended independent claims 1, 5 and 6 to more clearly state the invention. More specifically, applicant has amended the claims to recite that the letter speech recognition unit does not use a letter grammar which denotes

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probabilities of the occurrence of different possible letter combinations. No new matter has been added. Support for the amendment may be found on page 13, lines 16-20 of the instant application.

Junqua, as read by applicant, teaches call routing device employing continuous speech. The device employs a "bigram letter grammar [that] is essentially a database of pairs of letters and an associated probability that one letter follows another." See col. 8, lines 4-6. Junqua further teaches that the estimates of the inputted letters are organized in a tree structure that propagates the N-best hypotheses between the passes. In this tree-structure, only those letter combinations formed based on the preceding letter are propagated.

Fujisaki, as read by applicant, teaches a handwriting word recognition device that teaches the use of the A\* algorithm, which is referred to in the claims. Fujisaki fails to teach or suggest a letter speech recognition unit that does not use a letter grammar which denotes probabilities of the occurrence of different possible letter combinations.

Even if there were some suggestion of combining the teaching of Junqua and Fujisaki, the combined device would fail to include all the elements recited in claim 1. As noted Junqua uses a bigram letter grammar and Fujisaki constructs letters from a combination of letter strokes.

Accordingly, the combination of Junqua and Fujisaki cannot render the present invention, as recited in amended claim 1, obvious because there is no suggestion or teaching to combine the devices and even if it were possible to combine the two teachings the combined device would not include all the elements claimed.

Applicant submits that the examiner's rejection of claim 1 has been overcome and respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claim.

With regard to dependent claims 2 and 3, these claims depend from claim 1, which has been shown to be allowable over the cited references. Accordingly, claims 2 and 3 are also allowable by virtue of their dependence upon an allowable base claim.

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With regard to claim 4, this claim depends from claim 1, and even if the teachings of Cecinati were incorporated into the teachings of Junqua and Fujisaki as suggested by the examiner, the combined invention would not include all the subject matter recited.

Cecinati, as read by applicant, teaches a two-level hierarchical speech recognition system, which the examiner has recited for showing that the use of two integrated circuits was known in the art. However, Cecinati fails to disclose or recite subject matter recited in claim 1, which has been shown not to be recited in either Junqua or Fujisak. Accordingly, the combination of Junqua, Fujisaki and Cecinati cannot render the present invention obvious as the combined device would not include all the subject matter recited in claim 4, which depends from claim 1.

With regard to claim 5, applicant respectfully disagrees with, and explicitly traverses, the examiner's reason for the rejection. However, applicant has amended claim 5 in a manner similar to claim 1.

Attwater, as read by applicant, describes an automated system for voice-operated services. Attwater teaches a device that receives word inputs and culls from a larger database or vocabulary a smaller vocabulary based on the word spoken. Attwater teaches that the initial database includes all possible answers to a series of questions to which the user responds. The user's answer to individual questions is then used to limit the vocabulary to the words associated with the user's answer. By continuously applying word responses to a series of provided questions, a result is culled from the initial vocabulary. Hence, Attwater teaches that the vocabulary searched when a next word is provided is essentially fewer in number than a previous vocabulary. Attwater fails to teach that word recognition is restricted to a vocabulary that is the result of letter recognition unit as is recited in the claim. As the examiner notes, neither Junqua nor Fujisaki explicitly describe inputting and recognizing a whole word and Attwater fails to discuss limiting a vocabulary based on results of a letter recognition unit.

Even if there were some motivation to combine the references as suggested by the examiner the combined device would not include all the subject matter recited.

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With regard to claim 6, applicant respectfully disagrees with, and explicitly traverses, the examiner's reason for the rejection. However, applicant has amended this claim in a manner similar to that of claims 1 and 5.

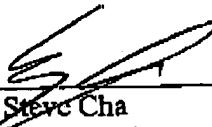
As discussed previously, Attwater fails to disclose that word recognition is restricted to a vocabulary that is the result of letter recognition unit as is recited in the claim and Cecinati discloses using two integrated circuits. Accordingly, the combination of Attwater and Cecinati would not disclose all the elements recited in the claims.

Although the last Office Action was made final, this amendment should be entered. Claims 1, 3, 5 and 6 have each been amended to more clearly state the invention. No matter has been added to the claims that would require comparison with the prior art or any further review. Accordingly, pursuant to MPEP 714.13, applicant's amendments should only require a cursory review by the examiner. The amendment therefore should be entered without requiring a showing under 37 CFR 1.116(b).

For all the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all the present claims are patentable in view of the cited references. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issues remain that the examiner believes may be resolved via a telephone call, the examiner is invited to call applicant's attorney at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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